

# **Sociolinguistics**

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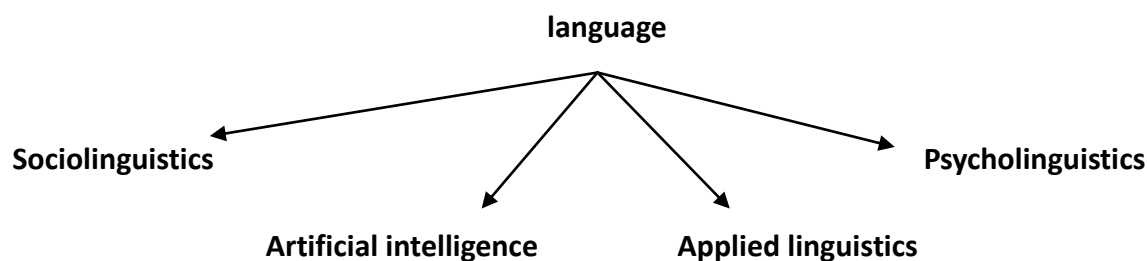
## Lecture 1

### In this lecture, we will discuss the following:

- 1- Why do we study language?
- 2- Characteristics of Language.
  - A- Language is a system.
  - B- Language has the potential to **create new meanings**
  - C- Language can have multiple functions:
    - a. Language used referentially.
    - b. Language used affectively
    - c. Language used aesthetically
    - d. Language used phatically.
  - D- Language is diverse

### Why do we study language?

When we study language we discover more about different fields of knowledge:



### Psycholinguistics

Definition:

**Psycholinguistics:** is the study of how a listener recognize words and utterances, or how damage to our brains results in certain kind of language disorders.

### **Applied Linguistics**

A branch of linguistics where we study how to learn and to teach different languages.

### **Sociolinguistics**

The study of the relation between language and society and the different varieties of language people use

### **Artificial intelligence:**

The study of how to make computers more sophisticated

### **Who is interested in Language?**

- Language related issues are discussed in newspapers, television, lectures, etc.
  - e.g. complaining about jargon used in classroom
  - e.g. coining new words.
  - e.g. importance of political speeches, etc.

### **What is language?**

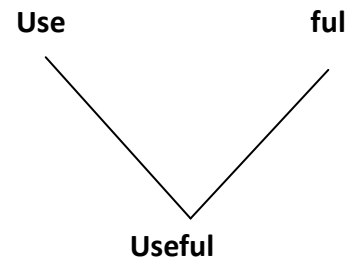
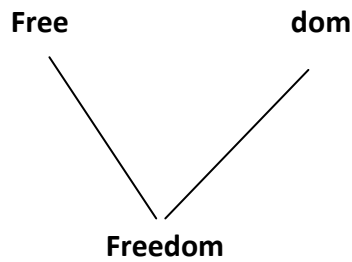
#### **Characteristics of Language.**

- 1- Language is a **system**.
- 2- Language has the potential to **create new meanings**
- 3- Language **can have multiple functions**.
- 4- Language is **diverse**

## Language is a system.

- **Language** is a systematic way of combining smaller units into larger units for the purpose of communication:

Ex. unit + unit = lexical items. phoneme + phonemes = lexical items



Ex. syntax

book                      Very                      This                      is                      useful

This                      book                      is                      very                      Useful

Phonemes, Lexical items, Syntax

**Phonemes:** the sounds of our language. E.g. /k/, /t/, etc.

**Lexical items:** the words of our language. E.g. Help, homework, etc.

**Syntax:** grammatical rules which determine how words can be combined into phrases and sentences:

E.g. The nice book                      \*book the nice  
Jane is happy                      \*Is happy Jane

- The use of a star \* means that the sentence is ungrammatical.

Language has the potential to create new meanings

E.g.

<b>Arabic:</b>	أتمتة	يؤتمت
<b>English:</b>	Important	unimportant
	Boss	Bossy

We can easily understand what these new words mean:

- Unimportant = not important
- Bossy = to order people around.

This characteristics distinguishes human language from other languages: E.g. Birds have very limited range of messages.

**Language can have multiple functions:**

Language can be used in different ways:

- A. Language used referentially.
- B. Language used affectively.
- C. Language used aesthetically.
- D. Language used phatically.
- E. E. Language is diverse

**A. Language used referentially.**



## Lecture 2

### In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

- 1- Power and language.
  - Definition of power
  - How can language impose power?
- 2- Saussure's theory of language.
- 3- Sample exam questions for lectures (1+2)

### **Definition of power**

Power is The ability of its holders to force compliance or obedience of other people to their will.

Eg. A police officer can use power to stop criminals or thieves and make them comply with the law.

### **How can language impose power?**

Statistics published by the State of the World Forum (September 2000):

- Number of pages on the World Wide Web: 320,000,000

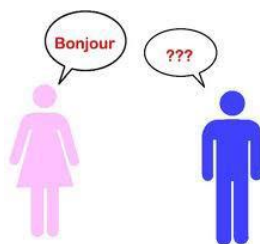
This means that:

-The English language has the power to dominate the the Web. It has become so widespread.

- Percentage of all websites in English: 80

This means that:

If you do not speak a certain language you are excluded from some kind of power.



Which language we speak can be pathway to power

Knowing a language is power.

E.g. People who have knowledge (language or an skill) have the power to make you feel ignorant or confused because they have knowledge that you do not have.

E.g. An average person vs. an expert

### **Saussure' theory of language**

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was a Swiss linguist whose ideas laid a foundation for many significant developments in linguistics in the 20th century.



**Theory:** Language as a Representational System

## Principles of Saussure' theory of language

As soon as you hear or read a word, you know what concepts it refers to.

Ex.

Tree

watch



### Saussure divided language into two parts.

**1- Langue** is 'our [innate] knowledge of the systematic correspondences between sound and meaning which make up our language (including the knowledge of what utterances are possible . . . and what utterances are not).

E.g. \* see tomorrow I will

I will see you tomorrow.

**2- Parole:** is the actual use of language in both speech and writing



Langue



parole

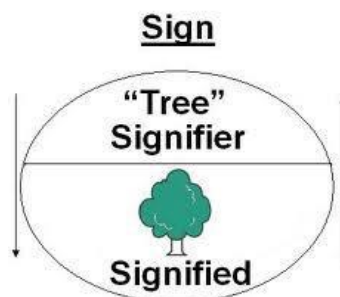
## Principles of Saussure' theory of language

### Signifier and signified

**Signifier:** the sound sequence which makes up a label

**Signified:** is the meaning or concept associated with the signified.

**Sign:** is the correspondence between signifier and the signified. It is the association that binds the signifier and the signified together.



The link between the signified and the signifier is arbitrary

English	French	Arabic	Spanish	German
Car	Voiture	سيارة	coche	Auto

Sign partially derive meaning from their relationship with other associated signs.

overcrowded



Crowded



We know the meaning of overcrowded through its relation with crowded

Signs do not exist in isolation, but in systems of associative relationship.

White Tulip Red Tulip

We know the meaning of white tulip through its association with red tulip.

### Sample exam questions: lectures (1 and 2).

..... is the study of how a listener recognize words and utterances.

- a. Psychosis
- b. Psychotherapy
- c. Psychology
- d. Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is the study of.....

- a. How to describe the sounds of a language.
- b. How to learn languages.
- c. How to teach languages
- d. how a listener recognizes words and utterances.

..... refers grammatical rules which determine how words can be combined into phrases and sentences:

- a. Morpheme
- b. philosophy
- c. **Syntax.**
- d. Morphology

The .....is used to **keep communication lines open** and also keep social relationships well

- a. aesthetic function
- b. *phatic function*
- c. *Referential function*
- d. *Affective function*

There is more than one .....of English, eg. Indian English, American English

- a. variety
- b. verb
- c. Language
- d. Terminology

Aesthetic language is usually used in .....not in science

- a. Mathematics
- b. Physics
- c. Poetry

d. Morphology

Choose the example that expresses the affective use of language:

- a. It is very hot to day.
- b. *Wow, she is very beautiful*
- c. *Go to the end of the road.*
- d. *Put those books on the table.*

**Lecture 2**

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was a .....linguist

- a. Syrian
- b. Swiss
- c. British
- d. American

Saussure divided language into two parts: langue and .....

- a. paradox
- b. Pardon
- c. Parole
- d. grammar

.....is the actual use of language in both speech and writing

- a. linguistics
- b. B. language
- c. Competence
- d. Parole

The link between the signifier and the signified is .....

- a. Regular
- b. Systematic
- c. Arbitrary
- d. Logical

.....is The ability of its holders to force compliance or obedience of other people to their will.

- a. Parole
- b. Language
- e. Power
- c. signifier



## Lecture 3

### In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

- 1- The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The hypothesis refers to two parts:
  - A. Linguistic relativity
  - B. Linguistic determinism

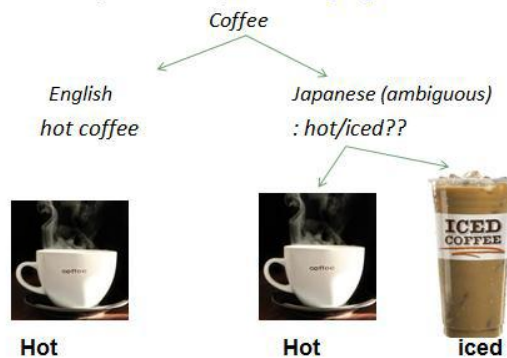
### Chapter 3

- 1- Language and Politics
- 2- Ideology
- 3- Role of Language in establishing ideology
- 4- Political discourse.
  - Presupposition
  - Implicatur
- Persuasive language.
- Rhetorical devices

### The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

#### The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

- There is a causative link between culture and language.
- A community's **cultural experience shapes their language.**



2-The hypothesis refers to two parts:

- A. Linguistic relativity
- B. Linguistic determinism

#### A. Linguistic relativity

Languages of different cultures involve distinct systems of representation which are not necessarily equivalent.

language

Eg. The student bought the book

English	tense distinction is included. Past form of buy (bought)
Turkish	Specifies whether the action was <b>witnessed</b> by somebody or not
Indonesian	tense distinction is <b>optional</b>
Russian	<b>Gender</b> distinction is included

Speakers of different languages refer to different aspects of the world. That is their language affect the way they think.

**Eg. Arabic:** زارت ناديا صديقتها

**English:** Nadia visited her friend.

**B. Linguistic determinism:** language affects the thought processes of its speakers.

-the language you speak determines the way that you will interpret the world around you.

-Our language determines how we see the world (we can't see things another way)

language and its structures limit and determine human knowledge or thought

-individuals experience the world based on the grammatical structures they habitually use

### Chapter 3 Language and Politics

**What is meant by politics:**

**Politics** is concerned with **power**: the power to **make decisions**, to **control resources**, to **control other people's behaviour** and values.

There is no keeping out of politics. Politics can involve most aspects of life.

#### Everyday's decisions and politics.

Eg.

In a supermarket:

-Buying some brand of **coffee** rather than another:

When you choose specific brand you make a small contribution to the continued existence of a particular company.

Eg.

-Recycled paper goods or non-recycled paper goods

-Organically grown vegetable or genetically modified vegetables.

-Imported food or food produced in your country.

#### Politics and Ideology

How to achieve political beliefs.

1- Physical coercion

Associated with dictatorial regimes

2- Legal laws

Associated with democratic regimes

Eg. Laws for car parking, places where you can drink alcohol, etc.

3- Persuasion and consent.

Persuade people to act voluntarily in the way you want

-what you want is what your people want.

To achieve this we need **ideology**

#### Ideology

Ideology:

Any set of beliefs which, to people who hold them, appear to be logical and natural.

Questioning the ideology:

- difficult

- challenging

- appears not to make sense
- a price to be paid.

### Political Discourse

1- Presupposition

2- Implicature

These are two main tools that can lead the hearer to make assumptions about the existence of information that is not made explicit in what is actually said.

Eg.

-Why did you kill your wife?

This sentence presupposes that the listener has really killed his wife.

### Presupposition

Presupposition is the background assumption embedded within a sentence or a phrase.

Eg.

We want to set people free. (British conservative politician).

This example presupposes that people are not currently free.

### How to use presupposition in a sentence?

1- **Adjectives**, especially comparative adjectives.

**Eg.** Good better

We need a better teacher. (presupposes that the current teacher is not good)

-Fair fairer

The government will introduce a fairer funding for schools.

(presupposes that the current funding is not fair).

2- **Possessives**

**Eg.** We will not talk about Sally's problems any more.

(Presupposes that we have talked before and that Sally has problems.)

3- **Questions instead of statements**

Eg. Is it not now time to study hard?

Presupposes that the listener did not study hard.

Eg. Do not you think that we should make use of our time?

Presupposes that we have wasted our time?

### Implicature.

Implicature leads the listener to infer something that was not explicitly asserted by the speaker.

Characteristics.

-Implicature operates over more than one sentence.

-Implicature depends on shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.

-Implicature depends on the surrounding context of the discourse.

Eg.

A: Will Sally be at the meeting this afternoon?

B. Her car broke down.

Implicature: Sally won't be at the meeting.

## Lecture 4

### In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

❖ Persuasive language.

The power of Rhetoric

- A. Rhetorical Devices used by Politicians:
- B. Metaphor
- C. Simile
- D. Personification
- E. Euphemism
- F. The Rule of Three
- G. Parallelism
- H. Pronouns

❖ Language and the media

❖ Potential power of the media

❖ Media Language and Power.

- A. Sources of news
- B. Commonsense Discourse
- C. The Power of Change

### **Persuasive language- the power of rhetoric.**

**Rhetoric:** is the art of using language so as to persuade or to influence others”

Oxford English Dictionary.

**Rhetoric :** is group of rules that speakers/writers adhere to so that they express themselves with eloquence (using language to best effect).

### Rhetorical Devices used by Politicians:

a. Metaphor: is a way of comparing two different concepts:

e.g. Sally is an angel.

their house is a palace.

b. Simile: asserts that something is similar something else.

e.g. Sally is like an angel.

their house is similar to a palace.

### **Simile and Metaphor**

While a metaphor asserts that something is something else, a simile asserts that something is similar to something else.

#### Simile

The room was like an oven

Her hair is golden silk.

The sun was like a diamond in the sky

He was like a lion in the battle

Her smile was as bright as the sun.

The night was as black as tar

#### Metaphor

This room is an Oven

Her hair was golden silk

The sun was a diamond in the sky

He was a lion in battle

### Examples showing the use of metaphor/simile in politics

That vast wealth producing engine of the West began to splutter

Margaret Thatcher. 1983

Thatcher talks about the Western economy which she says is an engine.

The airport is already acknowledged as the economic motor of the region'

Graham Stringer, 1997

**Personification** is a rhetoric device that entails giving human characteristics to inanimate objects or abstract ideas

Eg.

a. Once again the heart of America is heavy. (Us President Lyndon Johnson).

The use of personification in (a) can give the speech a poetic effect.

b. Germany is the bully in the playground. (British TV news 1990s)

The use of personification in (b) has an ideological effect: indicating Germany's strong and influential position in the European Union or its dominance in Europe

Further examples:

c. Germany is the conductor of the orchestra.

d. Germany is the captain of the ship.

**Euphemism** is a rhetorical device which uses mild or inoffensive language to make something seem more positive than it actually appears

#### E.g. Sex or Death

Make love                      sexual intercourse

Die                                      pass away

#### E.g. Military matters

Clean strikes                      deadly strikes

Positive effect through the connotation of **clean** which means **healthy**

Decommissioning                      disarming

Put weapons beyond use                      surrender

Ethnic cleansing                      forcible removal of civilians

The term is used to hide the fact of forcing civilians to move out of their homes because they belong to specific ethnic group.

#### E.g. diplomatic meetings

Free and frank exchange of views                      flaming row

**The rule of Three:** a rhetorical device where a statement is divided into three parts or points.

E.g.

That government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from this earth

. (Abraham Lincoln)

The cry of the French Revolution (liberty, equality, brotherhood).

Tony Blair claimed that three main commitments of the labour party were education, education , education.

## Parallelism.

**Parallelism:** A rhetorical device which expresses several ideas in a series of similar structures.

Politicians use parallel structures when they want to draw attention to a particular part of their message:

E.g.

***“we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets. Winston Churchill 1940***

This can serve to emphasize that

- a. **the ideas are equal in importance**
- b. **and add a sense of symmetry and rhythm,**
- c. **make the speech more memorable.**

**Pronouns** is a device which can be used by either to emphasize or to obscure responsibility and agency.

E.g. **We** have no choice but to consider retreating combat units as a threat

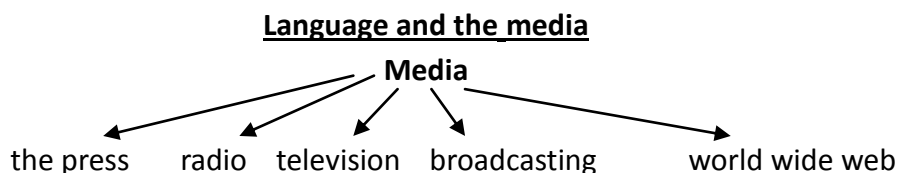
[ . . . ] Nearly six weeks ago, **I** said that our efforts are on course'

US President George Bush

Why do you think George Bush change from *we* to *I*?

**Answer:**

He uses *we* when the focus of his speech is relatively controversial, as it is unclear whom *we* refers to. He uses *I* when he is on safer ground and where he claims responsibility for positive achievements.



**Importance:**

We get our knowledge of the world through media

**Potential power of the media**

Media can represent a powerful source in society:

- a. The media can select what counts as news.
- b. The media can who gets on the television, radio or newspaper.
- c. Media plays important role in the ways through which information is told or presented
- d. The media has become an integral part of most people's lives

**Media, Language and Power.**

Linguistic representation is a level of language use which is concerned with the relation between how a story is told and how this can lead to different view or versions of the same story or event.

**Journalist (1)**

narrates the event as they appeared  
gives informative facts,  
states official sources from police  
and hospitals, etc.  
Reports facts objectively

**Journalist (2)**

openly refers to the ethnic community the  
involved individuals belong to.  
Gives expected incidents.  
Uses unofficial sources. E.g. Friends and  
personal experience  
Reports facts subjectively

## Sources of news

The factuality level of a source is very important.

Examples of unreliable sources:

- A friend of Mr. Carling is reported as saying ....
- He told me later that .....

These are examples of third- or fourth-hand source of information because the reported information is difficult to retrieve or verify

### Commonsense Discourse

*Discourse* is used in linguistics with a range of meanings. It can refer to

- a. Any piece of connected language which contains more than one sentence.
- b. It refers to conversations.

The prevailing way that a culture talks about or **represents something is called the dominant discourse**

**Ex.**

- a. I want to go to the forest and try to understand what the plants are saying
- b. I want to go to the forest to be inspired by nature.

## The Power of Change

**Media can lead to different changes in the society:**

### 1- The use of non-sexist language

Eg. The use of grammatical forms which are neutral such as the third person pronoun being a non-specific-gender pronoun

**Eg:** Gender-specific nouns: *fireman, chairman*

Gender-neutral nouns: *firefighter, chairperson*

### **Example of sexist language**

The athlete should get the appropriate amount of rest before **his** match.

### **Correction:**

The athlete should get the appropriate amount of rest before **his/her** match.

Most job titles that were gender-specific in the past have an equivalent gender-neutral synonym today

### **Examples:**

mailman	mail carrier, postal worker
waitress/waiter	server
saleswoman/salesman	Sales representative, sales clerk
policewoman/policeman	police officer
congressman	congressional representative
chairman	chair, chairperson,

## Lecture 5

### In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

#### **Media Voices: accent and Register**

variation in register

#### **Public participation in the Media**

#### **Language, society and virtual power.**

social identity

Netiquette Netiquette

Cyberspace: a socially powerful community?\

#### **Language and gender**

How is English sexist?

Characteristics of Sexist language

Symmetry and asymmetry

#### **Media Voices.**

What accent is used in the media?

Received Pronunciation(advanced RP)    BBC English    mainstream (RP)



#### **Received Pronunciation (advanced RP):**

refers to the accent used by the educated and the wealthy. It gave no indication of what part of the country the speaker came from

#### **BBC English:**

A pronunciation of British English based on the speech of the upper class of southeastern England

#### **Mainstream (RP):**

An accent which sounds less formal than advanced RP and is the one that most people in Britain generally hear when they listen to newsreaders on national television.

#### **Variation in Register.**

What is Register?

Register is the way that language can systematically vary according to the situation in which it is used.

Variation in Register can be in

- ❖ Sentence structure,
- ❖ Pronunciation
- ❖ Vocabulary

Three factors that determine variation in register.

Field: refers to the subject matter of the discourse

Tenor: *refers to the role being played* by the speaker

Mode: refers to the medium of communication, e.g. speech or writing.

E.G

the weather forecast contains technical vocabulary relating to temperature, high and low pressure, cyclones, etc.,



Field= weather forecast

Tenor = weather reported

Mode = technical vocabulary (temperature, high and low pressure)

a small sun to represent sunshine

arrows for the direction of the wind, etc.

### **Public participation in the media**

What are the reasons for allowing the public to participate in the media. (TV shows)

1-This provides the opportunity for democratic debate in the media.

2- This can depoliticize some important issues by presenting them for public debate.

3-This opens up access to an important public domain for people whose voices and opinions are not usually heard on television.

4- This provides a powerful space for the voices of ordinary people to be privileged over the voices of institutional representatives whose opinions and views usually predominate in the media.

### **Language, society and virtual power**

Computer mediated communication (CMC)

This includes different forms of interactions ranging from email to newsgroup

Social identity

In the early days of CMC it was thought that this new medium would result in more democratic communication, because a person's social identity (their gender, ethnicity, age) can be hidden in the virtual world. However, this is not the case as stereotypical interpretations of gendered behaviour still prevail:

So you can disguise your identity on the net, the people you interact with will still make assumptions about who you are based on what you say and how you say it.

### **Netiquette (short for network etiquette)**

**Netiquette** refers to the rules that attempt to control social interaction in the virtual world (cyberspace).

**E.g.** There are rules and codes of behavior which have developed in order to control the way members of a community behave as in chat rooms.

Many newsgroups have a FAQ (frequently asked questions) file which sets out what these rules are,

Inappropriate behavior can get you sanctioned, and possibly excluded from, a group.

**E.g.**

Flaming (aggressive verbal behavior)

spamming (sending unwanted long messages)

### **Cyberspace: a socially powerful community?**

Diverse groups of people who participate in protests and campaigns via the internet, can be socially and politically powerful.

Example

In case a database such as (Marketplace Households) (listing details of people and the items they bought) are released.

-This can result in intense debate about privacy

-The debate is not only in newspapers but across internet newsgroups and bulletin boards.

### Language and gender

We will discuss:

- a. asymmetrical representations of women and men
- b. Why language can be considered sexist ?
- c. Whether women and men use language in different ways

Sex and Gender

Sex refers to biological category, which is usually fixed before birth.

Gender refers to social category, which is associated with certain Behaviour.

**Sexist language** represents women and men unequally, as if members of one sex were somehow *less completely human*, or *had fewer rights* than members of the other sex.

**Examples of sexist language :**



#### Characteristics of Sexist language

Sexist language presents stereotypes of women and men sometimes to the disadvantage of men, but more often to the disadvantage of women.

**E.g.**

The most common stereotype about women's speech is that women talk a lot

Men are strong and do all the work.

husband works, wife stays home

-Men still hold more 'high-status' occupations in this society than women do.

**E.g.**

Most presidents around the world are men.

-Men still own more property and earn more than women.

How is English sexist?

Sexist language can be discussed in two points:

1- English language system is inherently sexist

2- Some ways of using language are sexist

Point (1)

to what extent English is inherently a sexist language:

Answer:

We look for symmetry versus asymmetry in the vocabulary or lexis.

## Symmetry and asymmetry

Symmetry		asymmetry	
generic	<i>Man</i>	woman	<i>Miss / Mrs / Ms</i>
female	<i>woman</i>	man	<i>Mr</i>
male	<i>man</i>		
young	<i>child</i>		
young female	<i>girl</i>		
young male	<i>boy</i>		

adult male = Mr

adult female = *Miss, Mrs or Ms*

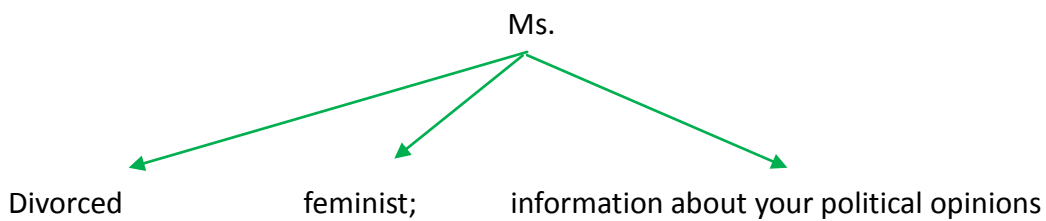
Any woman who gives her preferred title on a form is revealing far more information about herself than a man does.

E.g.

Miss reveals that *she* is unmarried

Mrs indicates that she is married

Ms. does not reveal marital status, in line with title for men



Men do not face this situation as the term Mr does not indicate all the information we find in women

**For next lecture, we will discuss the following topic**

**Some ways of using language are sexist**

## Lecture 6

### In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

How is English sexist? Some ways of using language are sexist

Unmarked and marked terms

5.2.3 Semantic derogation

5.2.4 Sexism in discourse

5.2.4 Sexism in discourse

5.3 Do women and men talk differently?

5.3.1 How much talk?

5.3.2 interruption

5.3.3 Back channel support

5.3.4 hedges and epistemic modal forms

5.3.5 Topic development

Marked and Unmarked terms

Marked means noticeably unusual. Marked terms refer to anything which deviates from the norm and this deviation is signalled by additional information

Unmarked

linguistic forms are neutral in so far as they represent the 'norm', and carry no additional information.

**E.g.** The unmarked form *nurse* is often assumed to refer to a woman. To refer to a nurse who is a man, the additional term *male* is often added: *male nurse* (the marked form).

<p><b>Male nurse</b> <b>Deviates from the norm.</b> <b>Carries additional information</b> <b>Marked form</b></p>	<p><b>Nurse</b> <b>Represent the norm</b> <b>Carries no additional information</b> <b>Unmarked form</b></p>
--	---

Marked and Unmarked terms

It is common for 'unmarked' terms to refer to males:

**E.g.**

waiter

host

actor

while to refer to a female, the terms are 'marked' by adding a suffix such as *-ess*.

**E.g.**

waitress

hostess

actress

This can make terms used for females different from the 'standard'

These examples can be interpreted as sexist because they imply that 'normal' or the high status people are men.

5.2.3 Semantic derogation

Semantic Derogation.

*Semantic* is a linguistic term referring to meaning; *derogate* means 'to cause to seem inferior.'

Master vs. Mistress

'He is my master'

usually means 'he is my boss' or 'he has more power than me'.

'She is my mistress'

is usually interpreted as meaning 'she is my illicit lover'.

Thus, words for women tend to lose status and refer to women with a sexual connotation.

This has clearly happened to *mistress* and not to *master*.

#### 5.2.4 Sexism in discourse

Sexism is sometimes located not in specific **words** but in the discourse, i.e. in a whole utterance or sentence

E.g.

Lying politicians, spin doctors and CHEATING SPORTSMEN (and HUSBANDS) will suddenly find life uncomfortable.

(Robin McKie in *The Observer*, 10 March 2002)

The above example shows how sexism in discourse can be used where the reference is to men (sportsmen and husbands) not women.

#### 5.2.5 Other explicit examples of sexism

Explicit means clear or obvious = direct examples of sexism

**E.g. Direct insults.**

A journalist explains why media award ceremonies are given so much media coverage:

"We get to see beautiful actresses and interesting actors'.

***The Independent newspaper (28 February 2002).***

This shows the emphasis on women's looks and on men's personalities.

#### E.g. Advertisements

In 2002, a well-known chocolate bar appeared with a new label. The label appears to insult girls by clearly stating that this product is "NOT FOR GIRLS"

- Using a dark blue foil (masculine symbol).

the wrapping has a circular icon of a woman crossed with a red line.



The product seems to use the term *girl* and the icon as insults

#### 5.3 Do women and men talk differently?



Is there any difference between men's and women's talk?

- Common stereotypes about women's talk:

- women talk more than men
- women never stop talking

This implies that women's talk is plentiful but rather pointless.

New Research results:

Men on the whole talk far more than women.

The fact that we tend to assume that women talk more in spite of the evidence /research indicates that women and women's activities are undervalued.

### **What are the differences between women's and men's use of language?**

Differences at the level of phonology: women and men vary in their pronunciation.

Syntactic differences: differences in the kinds of grammatical constructions they use.

Discoursal differences: differences in the kinds of things they talk about.

5.3.1 How much talk?

5.3.2 interruption

5.3.3 Back channel support

5.3.4 hedges and epistemic modal forms

5.3.5 Topic development

#### **5.3.1 How much talk?**

Research Results:

1- In a mixed-sex conversation, the average amount of time for which a man talks is approximately twice as long as the average amount for which a woman talks.

2- Boys talk more in front of the class than girls do, and absorb more of the teacher's time.

As a consequence of this research, changes to teaching styles in the UK have been made to distribute the amount of classroom talk, and the teacher's time, more fairly.

#### **5.3.2 Interruption**

The extent to which men interrupt women ....Men interrupt women more than they interrupt other men, indicate that men act as if they have more right than women to speak in mixed-sex conversations, and that women act as if they had less right to speak than men.

#### **5.3.3 Back channel support**

Back channel support is the verbal and non-verbal feedback listeners give to speakers.

Research suggests women are often more active than men in supportive roles in conversation.

Listeners can give feedback by saying things like:

*mmm, uhuh, yeah,*

nodding,

smiling,

frowning and by other body language including gestures.

#### **5.3.4 Hedges and epistemic modal forms**

Hedges are linguistic forms which 'dilute' an assertion.

E.g. *sort of, like, I think and kind of.*

modal auxiliary verbs

can be used to indicate that you don't want to sound completely certain about something. E.g. *Should, would, could, may and might.*

*Studies suggest that women exploit hedges and epistemic modal forms more than men*

#### **Why do women use hedges and epistemic forms?**

A. Women are less confident than men and feel nervous about asserting anything too strongly.

B. women prefer to avoid conflict and to allow disagreement to take place without explicit confrontation

### **5.3.5 Topic development**

Men and women vary in the topics they choose to discuss.

**Women,**

select more personal topics: **E.g.** family, emotions and friendships.

**Men,**

prefer more impersonal topics, often based on factual or technical knowledge

**E.g.** football, cars or home improvements.

## Lecture 7

**In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:**

5.4 Possible explanations

5.4.1 Dominance

5.4.2 Difference

5.4.3 Analysis of gender

Chapter 6: Language and ethnicity

6.1 Introduction

6.2 What is ethnicity?

6.3 The language of prejudice

6.3.1. the use of *our*

6.3.2 Negative labelling

Reclamation

### **5.4 Possible explanations**

Why men's and women's talks are different.

#### **5.4.1 Dominance**

**Dominance Theory:** takes the difference in power between women and men as the main cause of discursal **variation**.

**According to this theory:**

Men tend to have more power than women:

physically,

financially

and in workplace hierarchies.

**Weak points of Dominance theory:**

1- women are represented as 'powerless victims',

2- shows men as undermining, excluding and demeaning women.

#### **5.4.2 Difference**

Difference theory

It suggests that women and men develop different styles of talking because they are segregated at important stages of their lives.

E.g.

- playing in single-sex groups as children,
- having same-sex friendships in adult life

This leads to have separate rules for behaviour and, in particular, for talking.

#### **5.4.3 Analysis of gender**

**Gender** plays an important role in the difference between men's and women's talk:

**Adopting a certain style of talking to indicate our gender:**

*E.g.* We use clothes to indicate gender

We use jewelry, hairstyles and makeup to indicate our gender.





Similarly, we adopt a style of talk to indicate our gender

## Chapter 6: Language and ethnicity

### 6.1 Introduction

Sometimes people assume that you belong to a certain country/city based on your looks (skin or colour), language, etc.

### 6.2 What is ethnicity?

The attribution, or claim, to belong to a particular cultural group on the basis of genetics, language, or other cultural manifestations.

#### **-Ethnic majority and Ethnic minority**

**Ethnic majority** is a group which has a socially dominant culture.

**Ethnic minority** Refers to members of minority groups

#### **Ethnic majority vs Ethnic minority**

The ethnic majority has been established for a longer period of time and the minority groups are the more recent products of migration.

However, this is not always true

E.g. Native Americans (and their cultures) became displaced and marginalized by later European migrants.

#### **The language of prejudice**

**Prejudice** refers to preconceived, usually unfavorable, judgments toward people because of gender, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality, race/ethnicity, language, nationality or other personal characteristics.



#### **Use of *our***

E.g. The British National Party's aim is to nurture a 'feeling of national and cultural unity among **our** people', and makes reference to '**our** ancestors' whose efforts have made Britain '**our** country'.

**This shows that** The intended audience not only belongs to a British majority but also shares the same beliefs and attitudes. Non-White, British-born people are clearly excluded.

#### **6.3.2 Negative labelling**

The word **Black** was often linked in the British media with negative signs such as ***hate, fight, riot***

*The word Jamaican indicates illegal drugs* entering the country

The word *small islander* (which refers to people who have migrated from poorer and smaller islands) is **derogatory**

#### **Reclamation**

Reclamation is when members of ethnic minorities sometimes attempt to **reduce, or remove**, the power of derogatory ethnic labelling by **using those terms** among themselves, as positive markers of group identity.

E.g. ***Niggers*** can be used to indicate **ethnic solidarity**

Nevertheless, the term still retain negative connotations because it is still used as an ethnic abuse.

## Lecture 8

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

### **Language and Ethnicity (Chapter 6).**

#### 6.4 Language use as a marker of ethnic identity

##### 6.4.1 Language policy in the United States

### **Language and age (Chapter 7)**

#### 7.1 Introduction: what has age got to do with language?

#### 7.2 How can a language reflect the status of children and older people?

##### 7.2.1 Age as an important cultural category

##### 7.2.2 Labelling age groups

##### 7.2.3 Talking about age groups

#### **6.4** Language use as a marker of ethnic identity

1- Members of an ethnic minority have the desire to acculturate to what is considered mainstream.

- However, this desire will contradict their desire of the group's individual identity.

2- Ethnic minority members continue to participate in cultural, religious and linguistic practices which mark them as distinctive.

3-this can mean preserving or revitalizing a mother tongue.

4-Members of the majority do not favorably perceive the members of the ethnic minority choices.

#### 6.4. 1 Language Policy in the United States.

In 1990, the US government issued the Native American Languages Act.

the Native American Languages Act provides :

Promotion                      protection                      preservation Of the minority languages.

#### **Importance of the Native American Languages Act.**

It was the first federal recognition of the rights of Americans to make use of, and promote mother-tongue languages other than English

Different languages thrived in various American countries as mother tongues

German                      in Pennsylvania

Dutch                      in New York

French                      in Louisiana

Spanish                      in California

By the mid to late of nineteen century, there was a promotion of monolingualism.

E.g.

-The state of California stopped the Spanish-medium education.

- California's constitution declared that all legal proceedings and documentation were to be conducted and published only by English.

#### **English only Movement**

- Promotes English as the language which unifies America.

-facilitates the social assimilation of ethnic minority groups into mainstream norms.

This was supported by three groups: (1) English First and (2) US English and (3) English plus.

### 1- English First

- argues against multilingualism
- Views multilingualism as costly and ineffective

### 2- US English

- promotes English in Education
- assumes that English serves as a medium of integration among different minority groups who have different mother tongues.
- promotes fluency in English as a tool for empowering ethnic minority groups.

### 3- English Plus

Advocates proficiency in English but not at the expense of other languages and cultures

How does promotion of English actually impact on speakers with different native languages?

-The association of English with the mainstream norms serves to make acquisition of the language even more attractive.

-Members of ethnic minority groups voluntarily become subscribers to the ideology that adoption of mainstream norms is a positive social step

## Language and age (Chapter 7)

7.1 introduction: what has age got to do with language?

Age-related differences in vocabulary are often easily noticed by people.

Ex.

Labov (1972a) found that older New Yorkers were less likely to pronounce the 'r' in words such as *fourth* and *floor* than were younger speakers,

Ex.

Chambers and Trudgill (1980) found that in Norwich, England, the pronunciation of the 'e' in words like *bell* and *tell* varied according to the age of the speaker.

Ex.

Suzuki (2002) proposed that Japanese (as compared to older Japanese) young people's interest (as compared to older Japanese) in European culture and has resulted in an increase of foreign loanwords entering Japanese and in changes to the writing system.

### 7.2.1 Age as an important cultural category.

Age as a social category and as a means for determining duties, rights and privileges.

-Your age can determine whether you can

-attend school

-marry

- vote, etc.

There is a very strong tendency in English to place the adjective expressing the most 'defining' characteristic closest to the noun.

E.g. \**The old intelligent woman*

*The intelligent old woman*

### 7.2.2 Labelling age groups

Age groups can be classified into three main groups.

1- under five

2- between twenty and sixty

3- over sixty-five

The over-sixty-fives can have large number of specialised age group labels.

E.g.

aged , the elderly, senior citizen, retired person, pensioner, etc.

Some adjectives seem to 'belong' to a particular age group

E.g. For the elderly

*wise, dignified, frail, etc*

*For the young children*

*bouncing, cute, bratty, misbehaved*

There seem to be several adjectives that are used very frequently to describe both these groups.

E.g.

*Little, dear, sweet, fussy,*

*cranky, stubborn, foolish, etc.*

### **7.2.3 Talking about age groups: underlying evaluations of early childhood and old age**

#### **Some adjectives seem to 'belong' to a particular age group**

E.g. For the elderly

*wise, dignified, frail, etc*

***For the young children***

*bouncing, cute, bratty, misbehaved*

There seem to be several adjectives that are used very frequently to describe both these groups.

E.g. *Little, dear, sweet, fussy,*

*cranky, stubborn, foolish, etc.*

### **7.2.3 Talking about age groups**

#### **Childhood**

1 - Problematic

2- Vulnerable

3- have doctors of special terms. E.g. *Paediatrician*

4- they are likely to collect many donations.

5- they have special legal institutions designed to protect them.

6- Very young children are financially dependent on their parents.

7- Children are assumed to become 'productive' members of society.

8- There are several demeaning terms describing young children.

#### **Old age**

1- Problematic

2- vulnerable

3- Old people have doctors of special terms. E.g. *Geriatrician*

4- Old people are likely to collect many donations.

5- they have special legal institutions designed to protect them.

6- They are often seen (and see themselves) as no longer capable of contributing to the general prosperity of their families or of the wider society

7- The fear of death

8- there are vast insulting or demeaning terms. E.G. *Wrinklies, fossil, etc*

**Twenty-to-sixty-year-olds**

1 -No special term for doctors treating them

2- Unlikely to collect any donations

3- Virtually no insulting or demeaning terms

## Lecture 9

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

7.3 Talking to young children and the elderly (chapter 7).

7.3.1 Language characteristics of the under-fives and over-sixty-fives.

7.3.2 Child Directed Language

7.3.3 Similarities between Child Directed Language and 'Elder Directed' Language

7.3.4 Why might these similarities occur?

### 7.3.1 Language characteristics of the under-fives and over-sixty-fives

Language characteristics of the under-fives

1- The pitch of their voice is quite high relative to that of adults.

2- Their early pronunciations of words can be quite different from the adult versions.



### Language characteristics for the over-sixty-fives.

1- The over-sixty-fives are experienced language users.

2- Older people may require slightly longer processing time to produce and understand complex sentences.

3- Hearing often becomes less acute as people get older, and this can lead to a reduced understanding of rapid or whispered speech

or speech in a noisy environment.

4- The ageing of the vocal cords and muscles controlling breathing and facial movement results in slower speech .

### 7.3.2 Child Directed Language (CDL)

(CDL), sometimes called 'Baby Talk' or 'Motherese

Definition:

**Child Directed Language** is a special style used in speech to young children.

#### Characteristics of Child Directed Language.

- calling the child by name, often using a 'pet' name or term of endearment
- shorter, grammatically simpler sentences
- more repetition
- more use of questions or question tags ('That's nice, *isn't it?*')
- use of 'baby-talk' words
- expanding on and/or finishing a child's utterance.

### 7.3.2 Child Directed Language

#### Characteristic of the Sound of CDL

- higher pitch
- slower speed
- more pauses, particularly between phrases.
- clearer, more 'distinct' pronunciation
- exaggerated intonation. **E.g.** A very prominent rising tone used for questions.

#### Characteristics of young children conversation with their parents.

1- Young children are usually perceived to be **incompetent turn-takers**

- 2- The younger the children, the more likely their attempts to **initiate a new topic** will be ignored by older speakers
- 3- The younger the children, the more likely they are to be interrupted or overlapped (two speakers talking simultaneously).
- 4- There is a high proportion of **'directive'** and **'instructive'** talk from adults

### 7.3.3 Similarities between CDL and 'Elder Directed' Language

- Similarity in the content of the talk
- Similarity in the sound of the talk
- Similarities in the ways speakers interact

#### Similarity in the content of the talk

- simpler sentences,
- more questions
- repetitions,
- use of pet names.

#### Similarity in the sound of the talk

- higher pitch
- slower speed
- exaggerated intonation

#### Similarities in the ways speakers interact

- interrupting
- overlapping
- treating the person's contribution as irrelevant to the conversation
- using directive language



### Why do we use CDL?

- 1- Parents used it as a language-teaching tool.
- 2- to ensure understanding children who are not fully competent language users.
- 3- CDL asserts the power of the caregiver in relation to the child.
- 4- using CDL reflects affection and nurturance toward the recipient and a willingness to accommodate to their needs.

### 7.3.4 Why might these similarities occur?

- 1-Its use could be connected to **cultural expectations and stereotypes** about people in these groups.
- 2- Experiments have shown that speakers with an 'elderly' voice tend to be rated as **vulnerable, forgetful and incompetent** more often than speakers with younger voices.
- 3- Expectations of the elderly having a **decline in physical and mental capacity**

## Lecture 10

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

Language and class (chapter 8).

### 8.1 Introduction

### 8.2 Linguistic variation and social class

8.2.1 Accent and dialect: regional and social variation

8.2.2 Accent and dialect: a clue to social information

### 8.3 Does social class really affect language?

### 8.4 The problem of defining social class

### 8.5 Research into the relationship between language and social class

8.5.1 William Labov: the social stratification of 'r' in New York City

8.5.2 Peter Trudgill: the social differentiation of English in Norwich

8.5.3 Williams and Kerswill: dialect levelling in three British towns

Language and class (chapter 8).

### 8.1 Introduction.

-A given language is **not used in exactly the same way** by every one of its speakers.

-This variation can be caused by a number of things. One of these things is **class**.

-There is a connection between a person's **social class** and the **linguistic variety** that they

### 8.2 Linguistic variation and social class

#### 8.2.1 Accent and dialect.

**Accent:** refers to features of speakers' **pronunciation** that can signal their regional or social background.

The pronunciation of words is associated with a certain geographical area.

E.g. water in Cockney accent

water in London accent

**Dialect:** refers to a variety of a language that can signal the speaker's **regional or social background**. Unlike accents which differ only in **pronunciation**, dialects differ in their grammatical structures:

E.g. *Do you have . . . ? (US)*                      *Have you got . . . ? (UK)*

and in their vocabulary

E.g.

*sidewalk (US)*

*pavement (UK).*

#### 8.2.2 Accent and dialect: a clue to social information

Social class of a given character is often indicated by the type of accent or dialect they use

E.g. Literature:

In **Hamlet**, Shakespeare makes some clear linguistic distinctions between the lowly gravediggers and Prince Hamlet through their use of language:

- These gravediggers, members of the lower social classes, speak in prose (that is, ordinary speech), rather than in the verse which is spoken by the characters of higher social standing.
- Hamlet's speech is much more poetic than that of the gravediggers. Such poetic language suggests a character's educated background and socially superior position.

**8.3 Does social class really affect language?** YES. Social class affects language



- ❑ The higher a person is on the social scale, the more their speech will reflect prestige norms.
- ❑ speakers at the top of the social scale speak standard English with very little regional variation.

**E.g. Sentences**

***He's a man who likes his wife*** or ***he's a man that likes his wife*** are both acceptable forms in standard English,

-The further down the social scale we go, the greater the regional variation.

*He's a man at likes his wife,*

*He's a man as likes his wife,*

*He's a man what likes his wife,*

*He's a man he likes his wife*

*He's a man likes his wife*

**E.g. Words**

**WC    *Lavatory*                    *toilet***

All the above words are acceptable in standard English, and all refer to the same thing.

-There are some non-standard words which also refer to the same thing:

*bog    lav    privy    Dunny    john*

#### **8.4 The problem of defining social class**

Social class can be divided into:

- a. Upper
- b. Middle
- c. lower

- It is not easy to differentiate members of one social class from those of another.
- There are some factors which can determine the specific class that people belong to:

- 1- education,
- 2- occupation
- 3- economic

- Some people equates social class with money:

The main problem with equating social class with money is that it is not always the middle classes that have money.

- Some people equates social class with education:

The main problem with equating social class with education is that it is entirely possible that an individual who is middle-class might not earn more than an average amount of money.

#### **8.4 The problem of defining social class**

A report published in 1997 proposed a new classification for social class based on occupation:

**Class 1** Professionals and senior managers: doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.

**Class 2** Associate professionals and junior managers: nurses, social workers, etc.

**Class 3** Intermediate occupations: sales managers, secretaries, nursery nurses, etc.

**Class 4** Self-employed non-professionals: driving instructors, builders, etc.

**Class 5** supervisors, craft jobs: charge hands, plumbers, telephone fitters, etc.

**Class 6** Routine jobs: truck drivers, assembly line workers, etc.

**According to the above report:**

1- The further down the scale you go, the less well paid the jobs seem to be.

2- The more money a person earns, the higher up the social scale they are.

Why is it difficult to define social class?

Some of the jobs included in the lower divisions can actually provide a fairly high income, such as the plumber; plumbers can have a comparatively high income.

Some of the occupations listed in the higher class divisions, such as teaching, are not always the most well paid occupation.

## **8.5 Research into the relationship between language and social class**

Different sociolinguists studied the relation between linguistic variation and social class: we will discuss three studies :

8.5.1 William Labov: the social stratification of 'r' in New York City

8.5.2 Peter Trudgill: the social differentiation of English in Norwich

8.5.3 Williams and Kerswill: dialect levelling in three British towns

### **1-8.5.1 William Labov: the social stratification of 'r' in New York City**

In 1962, the American sociolinguist William Labov conducted a study of the relationship between social class and linguistic variation in New York City

Labov studied the **linguistic variation** in three department stores.

One is an upper class store, another is a middle class and the third is a lower class department store.

Labov wanted to find out whether the presence or absence of a pronounced 'r' in words such as *mother*, *bird* and *sugar* was determined by a speaker's social class.

#### **Findings**

Labov found that the higher the social class of the speakers, the more instances of post-vocalic 'r' they would use.

This means that there is a relation between social class and language.

### **8.5.2 Peter Trudgill: the social differentiation of English in Norwich**

Trudgill's aim was to find out whether social factors played a part in the way the people of Norwich spoke

Trudgill's research depended on creating situations of varying formality. Then he tests whether his informants will use

- formal style
- less formal style
- casual style'

#### **Findings**

Trudgill found that the higher a person's social class, the closer to the prestige variety their speech would be.

In other words, -The higher the social class of the speakers, the closer their speech is to the prestige variety.

### **8.5.3 Williams and Kerswill: dialect levelling in three British towns**

Williams and Kerswill studied the accents of adolescents in three British towns:

a. Hull            b. Melton Keynes    c. Reading

The three towns differ in their social composition

-Data were collected from 96 speakers through

- a. Individual interviews
- b. A discussion with a pair of speakers.

c. A group discussion

**Findings**

- Williams and Kerswill found that that the accents of the three towns were converging - levelling or becoming more alike.
- They found some class-based differences in pronouncing the vowel sounds of some vowels.
- They found some class-based differences in the shift to the consonant patterns of Estuary English:

- E.g.** a. the glottalisation of 't' in *butter*,  
b. the replacement of 'th' sounds with 'f' or 'v'.

This reflects the relation between social class and linguistic variation.

## Lecture 11

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

### Language and identity (chapter 9)

#### 9.1 Introduction

#### 9.2 What do we mean by linguistic identity?

#### 9.3 Language and the construction

### Language and identity (chapter 9)

#### 9.1 Introduction

**This chapter deals with different issues:**

- a. How people use language to construct a social identity?
- b. How social groups and communities use language as a means of identifying their members.
- c. How language relates to national and political identities

#### 9.2 What do we mean by linguistic identity?

- How you talk is an important way of
- displaying who you are
- indicating your social identity
- **Identity** is something which we are constantly building and negotiating through our interaction with others.
- **Identity is multifaceted (having many aspects, abilities).**

-People shift into different identities at different times in different situations.

-One of the ways we display this shift is through the language we use.

#### How can language indicate identity?

*where you grew up, where you went to school and how wealthy (or not) your family were* will to be displayed through the **variety of the language that you speak.**

The most obvious difference in the way people speak is in their

- Accent (pronunciation).
- Dialect (grammatical structure)
- Social class
- Education.

#### The importance of Linguistic Identity

**Speakers tend to use their linguistic identity for the different reasons:**

- 1- to disguise their membership of a particular social or regional group.
- 2- to distance themselves from a particular social or regional group.
- 3- to move closer to another group they want to belong to.

#### 9.3 Language and the construction of personal identities

In this section we will discuss two main points:

- 1- How personal identities are socially constructed through the use of names?
- 2- Systems of address, i.e how we refer to someone when you are talking to them.

### 9.3.1 Names and naming practices

- ❖ Using names is one of the most obvious linguistic ways of establishing people's identity.
- ❖ Names distinguish us from other members of a group.
- ❖ Names can sometimes carry important meanings for individual identity.

**E.g.** This is expressed in the writings of Simmonds, a Zambian writer, 1998:

“My names locate me in time and space. It gives me a sense of my own history that I not only share specifically with a generation of people in Africa but also with all Africans”

**E.g.**  
In the Hindu religion, a child was given two names. The first name was believed to give the child strength. The second name which was used to address the child by was believed to protect the child and give them as much good fortune as possible.

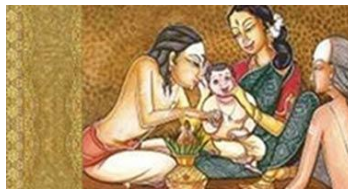


Image source:

<http://www.findyourfate.com/babynames/rasi.asp>

**Names can indicate acceptance in a particular culture.**

The giving of a name can indicate the acceptance of an individual into a particular culture or religion, establishing individual identity.

- E.g.**
1. **bar/bat mitzvah (in the Jewish religion)**  
This means becoming a member of the Jewish community with all the responsibilities that come with it.
  2. The giving of a saint's name at confirmation in the Roman Catholic faith



Image source:

<http://www.kesser.org/essays/rebuke.html>

**The way the names are used is very significant.**

The way names are used in interaction is central to the process of constructing individual identities within a group.

**E.g. Introducing people to each other:**

- a. Sally, this is Fadi.
- b. Sally, this is Dr. Fadi.

- In (a) Sally and Fadi are of the same status or belonging to the same group.

- In (b) Sally and Ahmad are of a different status of belonging to different groups.



Names can cause problems.

Names can cause problems, particularly if they don't fit in with the conventions of a community.

**E.g.** Children's playground practice of 'calling someone names' is a powerful resource for a dominant group to enforce their dominance and marginalize others.



### 9.3.2 Systems of address

#### How a name is used and its effect on identity.

The way that people use your name in a certain context helps to establish your identity within that context.

**E.g.**

The way that other speakers refer to you can depend on

- a. the degree of formality.
- b. the degree of intimacy
- c. your relative status of all the participants involved in the interaction.

#### Systems of address are culturally determined

In Britain, If you are addressing a judge, you use one the following address:

- ❖ your honour
- ❖ m'lord
- ❖ m'lady

To disregard the rules can lead to some form of disapproval or can be interpreted as an insult.

#### Implications of address terms

The way **address terms** are used can have important implications on the participants.

Ervin-Tripp 1980 describes a famous insult based on the choice of **address terms** by a white American policeman in addressing a black American doctor:

'What's your name, boy?'

'Dr Poussaint. I'm a physician.'

'What's your first name, boy?'

'Alvin.'

**Ervin-Tripp (1980: 22)**

- Using the address term '**boy**' shows that the policeman is deliberately insulting the doctor by not acknowledging his age, rank or status.

-The white policeman's use of an address term '**boy**' that places him in a socially inferior position.

- The policeman refuses to recognise the doctor's adult status and professional rank.

## Lecture 12

### In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

#### 9.4 Language and the construction of group identities

##### 9.4.1 Identity and representation

##### 9.4.2 Ingroups and outgroups

#### 9.5 Linguistic variation and the construction of identity

##### 9.5.1 Stylistic variation and language choice

##### 9.5.2 Power and linguistic imperialism

The standard English debate (chapter 10).

#### 10.1 Introduction

#### 10.2 What is standard English?

#### 9.4 Language and the construction of group identities

**Representation** is how the speaker chooses to refer to something or someone by categorizing them as belonging to a social group.

##### 9.4.1 Identity and representation.

-Imposing labels of identity:

We study a quotation by Sacks 1995:

“If a kid is driving, he’s seen as a **teenager** driving.... His problem, then, initially, is that he is in fact going to be **typed**; where for one, the category ‘**teenager**’ is a category owned by **adults**.”

(Sacks 1995: Lecture 7)

-Imposing labels of identity

According to Sacks 1995:

- A. Labels of identity are imposed by people who may be in a more powerful position.
- B. People who impose labels of identity may use the labels **to make a kind of social judgment**.
- C. We do not always control the categories people use to define our identity.
- D. We do not always control the cultural assumptions that accompany labels identity.

##### 9.4.2 Ingroups and outgroups

- **Determining one’s social identity.**

- a. Determining one’s social identity is not purely an individual matter.
- b. Determining one’s social identity is also bound up with **how others perceive us**.
- c. Our perception of ourselves can only be:

(1) in relation to others

(2) in relation to our status within a social group

d. Our status within a social group can be constructed through **language use**.

**Ingroup** is a social group to which the speaker belongs.

The **outgroup** comprises people who do not belong to that group.

E.g.

- Gang members may use certain expressions with each other that mark them as members of a particular gang or **ingroup**.
- At the same time, the use of these expressions can differentiate them from members of other gangs, the outgroups in that situation.

#### 9.5 Linguistic variation and the construction of identity

In this section we discuss how people can shift between different styles of

speaking, which contribute to the construction of a particular social identity.

### 9.5.1 Stylistic variation and language choice

**style-shifting** people do not always talk in the same way. They can shift their speech styles and this can involve using different words, pronunciations or even grammatical forms.

**E.g.**

Notice the style differences between:

- *singin'* and *singing*;
- *verdant* and *green*;

*So I says . . .* and *So I said .*

We also position ourselves in relation to others by the way that we talk in different kinds of interaction

**Audience design** refers to notion that speakers will take into account whom they are addressing and alter their speech style accordingly.

**Linguistic convergence** is a process in which speakers change their speech to make it more similar to that of their hearer,

**Linguistic maintenance** is a process in which speakers may choose not to converge, but instead to maintain their own variety.

**Linguistic divergence** is a process in which speakers choose to move away from the *Linguistic norms* of their hearer in order to emphasise the difference between themselves and the person or people they are talking to.

### 9.5.2 Power and linguistic imperialism

Language rights and recognition are often important issues in socio-political conflicts all around the world.

**E.g.**

**Maintenance** of a minority language within a majority culture (such as Spanish in the United States)

-Loss of a language can also be associated with a loss of cultural identity.

**Languages can be lost for a variety of reasons:**

- ❖ speakers may choose to shift from one language to another as social conditions change
- ❖ One language may be imposed and another suppressed by a dominant power. **End of Chapter**

9

## The standard English debate (chapter 10).

### 10.1. Introduction

The dialect known as standard English has special status.

- a. It is the dialect of institutions such as government and the law;
- b. It is the dialect of literacy and education.
- c. It is the dialect taught as 'English' to foreign learners.
- d. It is the dialect of the higher social classes. It is therefore the prestige form of English.

Examples of non-standard English

- multiple negation: **e.g** *I didn't know nothing*
- the use of 'ain't': **e.g** as in *I ain't got none*,

These are well-established English usages which don't happen to belong to the standard dialect.



The grammar of standard American and British English does not allow a sentence like *I didn't know nothing* because it contains *multiple negation*,

## 10.2 What is standard English?

### 10.2.1 Characteristics of Standard English

- a. Standard English is related to dialects, not accents.
- b. Standard English is difficult to isolate and put linguistic boundaries around.
- c. Standard English is the dialect of the middle and upper classes.
- d. Forms of Standard English are socially prestigious.

**Codification of Standard English** is a process where scholars analyse and record the vocabulary and grammatical patterns of a language. For English, much of this codification took place in the eighteenth century. The vocabulary and grammatical patterns that were written down in dictionaries and grammar books then became '**rules**'.

## Lecture 13

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

### **10.3 The linguistic definition of standard English.**

10.3.1 Linguistic variation

10.3.2 Logic and correctness

### **10.4 Standard English and education.**

10.4.1 Standard English in the school

10.4.2 Standard English and social equality

Attitudes to language (Chapter 11)

11.1 Introduction

11.2 The evidence

11.2.1 Attitudes to Whole languages

11.2.2 Attitudes towards Varieties of a language

11.2.3. attitudes towards Words and interaction

10.3 The linguistic definition of standard English.

10.3.1 Linguistic variation

It is difficult to give an exact linguistic definition of **Standard English** because *language varies in its use*.

**E.g.**

People use different styles of spoken language depending on the situations they find themselves in:

- where you are (at home, in the office, at the park).
- whom you are talking to
  - 1-in terms of status (**e.g.** *your boss*)
  - 2- in terms of age (**e.g.** *your little brother, your grandmother*)
  - 3- in terms of intimacy (**e.g.** *your best friend*).
- what you are talking about** (**e.g.** *the state of the nation's economy, your opinion of a work of art, a football game*)

### **10.3 The linguistic definition of standard English.**

#### **10.3.1 Linguistic variation**

The style of language you use depends on the **formality** of the context and the **amount of planning** that is involved.

**E.g.** Our language varies in the following situations:

- 1-** A casual conversation between you and a close friend is an **informal** event which won't be planned in advance.
- 2-** When you give a speech or lecture, you will **plan** what you say, and the **way** you say it

#### **10.3.2 Logic and correctness**

**Two claims were made for standard English:**

**1-** Standard English is **correct**: this claim indicates that non-standard varieties are **incorrect**.

**2-** Standard English is '**logical**' or systematic and rule-governed: this claim indicates that non-standard varieties are **not systematic** and not rule-governed

**Linguists argue against these claims**

e.g. (1)

The verb *be* in its distinction between singular and plural could be considered quite 'illogical'.

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
I was	we were
you were	you were
s/he was	they were

e.g. (2)

There is no distinction in standard English between the form of *be* with **Singular** *you* (*you were*) and **plural** *you* (*you were*).

## 10.4 Standard English and education

### 10.4.1 Standard English in the school

The motivation for making children speak standard English in school is explicitly given as the need to communicate effectively.

**e.g.**

In 1995, the British government launched the '**Better English Campaign**', whose aim was **to improve standards of spoken English around the country**.

### 10.4.2 Standard English and social equality

1 - There can be a relation between speaking a non-standard variety and social equality:

2 - John Rae links **standard English** to **economic survival** and success: "nothing more effectively condemns an individual to his class or ethnic ghetto than an inability to communicate clearly and logically in English"

3 - African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is seen as sub-standard and the obligation is firmly placed on its speakers to change.

4 - Speakers of a non-standard variety like African American Vernacular English (AAVE) may suffer discrimination at the hands of teachers and employers.

5 - Standard English is therefore seen as the **appropriate dialect in the job market**.

**E.g.**

In Britain, Gillian Shephard suggests that

*'those who have not mastered "our **marvellous language**" should not expect to be able to get a job'* (*Daily Mail*, 14 October 1994).

6 - There is a clear obligation on non-standard speakers to change if they wish to keep their rights as citizens to take up employment.

### **Standards English and standards.**

There is a close relation between the language we speak and our social standards:

Norman Tebbitt, MP, 1985 points out that:

*'If you allow standards to slip to the stage where good English is no better than bad English, where people turn up filthy at school . . . all these things tend to cause people to have no standards at all, and once you lose standards then there's no imperative to stay out of crime.'*

Similarly, John Rae 1982 points out that

*"Attention to the rules of grammar and care in the choice of words encourages punctiliousness in other matters . . . in such matters as honesty, responsibility, property, gratitude, apology and so on. (John Rae, *The Observer*, 7 February 1982)*

## Attitudes to language (Chapter 11)

### 11.1 Introduction

People assign various attributes to language forms; they may feel that a language or **variety** of a language is

- 'elegant'
- 'expressive'
- 'vulgar'
- 'guttural'
- 'musical'
- or that one language form is 'more polite' or more 'aesthetically pleasing or displeasing' than another one

### 11.2 The evidence

We can find evidence of positive and negative attitudes towards a wide range of linguistic issues:

#### 11.2.1 Attitudes to Whole languages

- A. In Britain, although many languages are in daily use, only English has official recognition.
- B. For the English especially, multilingualism is viewed with suspicion and as a threat to national unity.
- C. In a speech to a meeting at the Conservative Party Conference in October 1997, Lord Tebbit, a prominent Conservative, called for national unity saying,

*'we need common values, a common culture and **a single language**'.*

#### 11.2.1 Attitudes to Whole languages

- C. Attitudes towards English in the United States have an association with national Unity.
- D. The promotion of English, both in Britain and in the United States, leads to the marginalization of the other languages which exist there.
- E. Minority languages and their speakers may be seen as divisive, even dangerous, and a threat to political, social or economic stability.

#### 11.2.2 Attitudes towards Varieties of a language

We consider attitudes towards varieties of the same language.

E.g.

- A. Fasold (1984) describes how the French spoken in Europe is seen to be more prestigious than that spoken in Canada, even by native Canadian French speakers
- B. People, usually high class, show negative attitudes toward non-standard varieties of English in Britain, or towards American varieties such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the United States.
- C. The creation of verbs from nouns found more in American English than in varieties of British English is popularly criticised, as in this letter to **The Times**:

"Could we stop assuming that any noun can automatically be turned into a verb?"

*(The Times, 1 January 1994)*

#### 11.2.3. Attitudes towards Words and Interaction

- A. In 1997, the British Psychological Society prohibited the use of the word *subjects* in its publications to refer to those taking part in psychological experiments. Such participants were to be referred to as *individuals, people, students* and so on.

The letters to October 1997's edition of *The Psychologist* describe this decision as 'tosh' or 'trivial', and one which leaves the eminent writers of these letters 'baffled'.

**B.** Attitudes to words may be so negative that the words may be considered not suitable for use at all. We often invent **euphemisms** to cover such words.

**E.g.**

Instead of '*death*' and '*dying*' we might talk about 'passing away'.

**C.** Some words are considered so unsuitable that they become totally taboo.

**D.** Expressions such as *right, like, you know, see you later* are negatively treated: Some of these expressions may be associated with certain groups and may function as identity markers.

**E.g.**

The expression ***you know***

**You know** is considered to be a 'marker of imprecise, uncertain or uneducated "lower class" speech'.

**D.** When women speak, attitudes towards their talk are often negative; women's talk is labelled as 'chatter' or 'gossip' about unimportant or 'trivial' topics.

## Lecture 14

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

### **ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE (Chapter 11)**

#### 11.2.4 Attitudes to Pronunciation and accent

#### 11.3 The effects

#### **Final exam discussion.**

#### 11.2.4 Attitudes to Pronunciation and accent

-**The way** in which something is said is often as influential for the message as **what is said**.

we commonly have stereotypical ideas about people on the basis of their accents.

- **'Country bumpkin'**

- Country bumpkin refers to a person, usually from a rural area, who speaks or behaves in a manner that indicates a lack of sophistication.

-Countryside accents can be used to denote lack of intelligence with the stereotypical image of the 'country bumpkin'

- Lippi-Green (1997: 215) points out that in the United States, lack of intelligence is associated with women with southern accents.

#### **E.g.**

Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Arkansas, etc. **E.g.**

-Birmingham accent or a southern states accent is linked with criminality.

E.g. The *Daily Mail* (1 October 1997) reports that 'crime suspects with a Birmingham accent are twice as likely to be considered guilty'.

-'Noo Yawkese', is similarly stigmatised and its speakers are regarded as less trustworthy than those using the more standard American accent.

#### Matched guise experiment

Matched guise experiment is a method of investigating people's attitudes to different languages. It involves informants listening to several recordings of the same 'script' spoken by the same speaker. The informants are then asked to judge each speaker's personal characteristics based on what they hear.

#### 11.3 The effects

**A-** A survey quoted in the *Glasgow Herald* (28 October 1997) reports that, in Britain, speakers with **Scottish accents** are rated the highest on sex appeal (sexual attractiveness).

**B-** In the United States, negative and criminal stereotypes are associated with **Spanish-accented** speakers

**C-** (Lippi-Green 1997: 236) shows that stereotypes are reinforced in the media. **E.g.** Mexican-Americans are portrayed negatively:

*'recent stereotypes in film and television . . . have one thing in common: Mexican Americans are almost always portrayed as violent: they are drug-pushers, gang-members, pimps'*

**D-**Effects Lippi-Green records the evidence of a research student who was discussing language styles with a businessman whose job was to hire sales personnel. The businessman was positive that he wouldn't hire anyone with a Mexican accent.

E- 'Noo Yawkese' (i.e. New York speaker) find their accents a liability (problem): The *Washington Post* (16 December 1997) states:

*'natives of New York can get rich faster if they sound like they are from someplace else'.*

F- In Britain, reports in the press indicate that the way people speak affects their job prospects.

**E.g.**

*The Daily Telegraph* (12 March 1994) covers the story of **an employee of a Birmingham company who was fired for having a Birmingham accent.**

**G-** A survey by the Institute of Personnel and Development confirms that *employers tend to look down their noses at those who speak in the accents of Liverpool, Glasgow and Birmingham'* (The Guardian, 3 January 1993).

- **Effect of language attitudes on Education.**

- Giles and Coupland (1991:45) shows that teachers' perceptions of pupils' language can influence pupils' academic assessment:

*"research indicates that the perception of children's so-called 'poor' speech characteristic leads teachers to make negative inferences about their personalities, social background and academic abilities. (Giles and Coupland 1991: 45)*

**Sample exam questions:**

In the United States, negative and ..... are associated with **Spanish-accented** speakers

- A. criminal stereotypes
- B. critical stiff types
- C. curly stripe
- D. crispy meal file

*-Mexican stereotypes in film and television have one thing in common: Mexican Americans are almost always portrayed as .....: they are drug-pushers, gang-members, pimps'*

- A. calm
- B. *violent*
- C. *nice*
- D. *Quiet*

**Matched guise experiment** is a method of investigating people's ..... to different languages.

- A. attires
- B. latitudes
- C. attitudes
- D. tattoos

**Speakers tend to use their linguistic identity for the different reasons:**

- A. to disguise their membership of a particular social or regional group.
- B. to distance themselves from a particular social or regional group.
- C. to move closer to another group they want to belong to.
- D. All the above